

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NEA-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-15 TRSE-00

MBFR-04 SAJ-01 DODE-00 ACDA-19 SS-15 NSC-10 AEC-11

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P R 101633Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1954

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

USLO SACLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 3975

PASS SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS, 12/31/79

TAGS: MCAP, NATO, NL

SUBJ: NATO SPECIALIZATION STUDY

REF: (A) USNATO 4129 (B) USNATO 4219

1. REFTEL A CONCERNING DUTCH DECISION TO NARROW THEIR NATO ROLE SOON, SUPPORTS WHAT THE DUTCH HAVE BEEN SAYING SINCE STUDY WAS RECOMMENDED. EMBASSY BELIEVES DUTCH MOD IS SINCERE IN HIS BELIEF THAT HE MAY HAVE TO REDUCE THE DUTCH NATO ROLE UNILATERALLY IF THERE IS NO TIMELY, AGREED NATO POSITION. THEREFORE, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT NATO STUDY BE CONSIDERED AN URGENT PRIORITY ITEM. A NATO POSITION WHICH CLEARLY DEFINES THE ROLES OF THE ROYAL
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NETHERLANDS AIR FORCE (RNLAf) FOR THE POST 1978 TIME PERIOD IS

DEFINITELY CALLED FOR.

2. FREQUENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE RNLAf AND OUR MAAG AND DAO CONFIRM THAT DUTCH AIR STAFF IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE STUDY SINCE IT COULD AFFECT THE VERY SURVIVAL OF THE RNLAf. THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT FAILURE TO GET A PROPER REPLACEMENT FOR THE F-104G STARFIGHTER WOULD HAVE A SEVERE IMPACT ON MORALE AND PRESTIGE, AND THAT IT WOULD RESULT IN A SLOW BUT STEADY DETERIORATION OF THE AF AS A VIABLE FORCE INEVITABLY LEADING TO ITS COMPLETE DISBANDMENT. THE OUTCOME OF THIS STUDY, THEREFORE, CANNOT BE OVER EMPHASIZED SINCE IT COULD SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE TYPE OF REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT THAT THEY WILL GET.

3. WHILE THE RNLAf IS PREPARED TO GIVE UP THE DEEP PENETRATION STRIKE/ATTACK AND THE ALL WEATHER AIR DEFENSE ROLES IN THE INTEREST OF SPECIALIZATION AND EFFECTIVENESS, IT WANTS TO KEEP THE OTHER CLASSICAL TACTICAL AIR FORCE ROLES BOTH CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR. BASICALLY WHAT THE RNLAf WANTS IS CONVENTIONAL OFFENSIVE AIR OPERATIONS WITH A CAPABILITY FOR LIMITED AIR SUPERIORITY AND LIMITED NUCLEAR CAPABILITY TO INCLUDE THE ENTIRE "BATTLEFIELD SUPPORT ROLE." THIS INCLUDES CLOSE AIR SUPPORT OF FRIENDLY TROOPS, CLOSE AND MEDIUM INTERDICTION, COUNTER AIR AGAINST AIRCRAFT DEPLOYED FROM MAIN OPERATING BASES (MOBS) TO FORWARD DISPERSED OPERATING BASES (DOBS), AIR SUPERIORITY AGAINST ALL SOVIET GENERAL PURPOSE AND AIR SUPERIORITY AIRCRAFT FROM THE GROUND UP TO ABOUT 50,000 FEET AND A LIMITED NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. AIR SUPERIORITY WOULD BE LIMITED IN TIME AND SPACE ONLY BECAUSE OF AIRCRAFT NUMBERS BUT NOT LIMITED IN AIRCRAFT CAPABILITY. THE NUCLEAR ROLE WOULD BE LIMITED ONLY BY DROPPING THE DEEP PENETRATION MISSION. IF THE ALL WEATHER AIR DEFENSE ROLE IS DROPPED, THE TWO SQUADRONS PRESENTLY DEDICATED TO THIS ROLE MUST BE RE-DEDICATED TO THE "BATTLEFIELD SUPPORT ROLE". THIS WOULD GREATLY INCREASE THE AIR SUPERIORITY CAPABILITY IN THE CENTRAL REGION PROVIDED THAT THE DUTCH ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE PROPER REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT.

4. THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS AIR FORCE HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED AN EVALUATION OF THREE AIRCRAFT TO DETERMINE A REPLACEMENT FOR THEIR F-104 G STARFIGHTER. THE THREE AIRCRAFT THAT THEY EVALUATED ARE THE SAAB VIGGEN, THE DASSAULT F-1 AND THE NORTHROP P.530
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COBRA. IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT THIS EVALUATION HAS CONCLUDED THAT THE P.530 COBRA BEST MEETS THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN AIRCRAFT TO PERFORM THE SPECIALIZED ROLES DEFINED ABOVE. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THE AMERICAN POSITION REGARDING THE NATO STUDY CLEARLY DEFINE ROLES FOR THE RNLAf WHICH WILL REQUIRE AN AIRCRAFT OF THIS CAPABILITY. THIS POSITION SHOULD AIM AT DETERRING ANY EFFORT TO FORCE THE RNLAf TO ACCEPT AN AIRCRAFT OF INFERIOR OR LIMITED CAPABILITY.

5. A PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF THE AIRCRAFT PROGRAMMED OR PROPOSED FOR THE NORTHERN CENTRAL REGION DURING THE POST 1978 TIME PERIOD REVEALS A PREPONDERANCE OF AIRCRAFT OPTIMIZED FOR THE AIR TO GROUND ROLE (E.G. ALPHA-JET, HARRIER, JAGUAR, BUCCANEER, F-111, MCRA, A-7, F-4 ETC.). THE SHORTFALL CERTAINLY APPEARS TO BE IN THE AIR SUPERIORITY ROLE. FURTHER, THE AIR FORCE MEMBERS OF THIS MISSION ARE CONVINCED THAT FLEXIBILITY IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OF A TACTICAL AIR FORCE, AND FLEXIBILITY CANNOT BE ACHIEVED UNLESS THAT AIR FORCE CAN SURVIVE ON ITS OWN WITHIN A HOSTILE AIR ENVIRONMENT. IT MUST HAVE THE FREEDOM TO DO WHAT IS TACTICALLY REQUIRED WHEN IT IS REQUIRED.

6. IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS NATO STUDY TO BOTH THE RNLAf AND THE NATO ALLIANCE, WE HOPE THAT EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO MEET THE DIRECTIVE FOR SUBSTANTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS BY OCTOBER 25 (REFTEL B). AS SEEN FROM THE HAGUE, THE UNITED STATES SHOULD USE ITS INFLUENCE TO OBTAIN A CONSENSUS THAT THE RNLAf ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SPECIALIZED TACTICAL ROLES LISTED ABOVE AND WE SHOULD PUT SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THEIR ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH THE AIR SUPERIORITY ROLE.

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